



Northwest Community Planning Forum



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What Is SNAP?

In 2002 Mayor Martin O'Malley launched the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) program to create comprehensive plans for select clusters of neighborhoods throughout the city. Following his administration's philosophy of putting Neighborhoods First and building on established strengths, SNAP establishes four central planning guidelines:

Partnership: Residents work with their neighbors across traditional boundaries, as well as with City agencies and other stakeholders (including nonprofits, churches, institutions, and businesses). During an era of limited resources, a broad stakeholder group has greater capacity to both create and implement the plan.

Priorities: Plans identify key assets in each cluster and build upon these strengths within a framework of market demand. Cluster priorities target implementable agency actions and services for maximum impact.

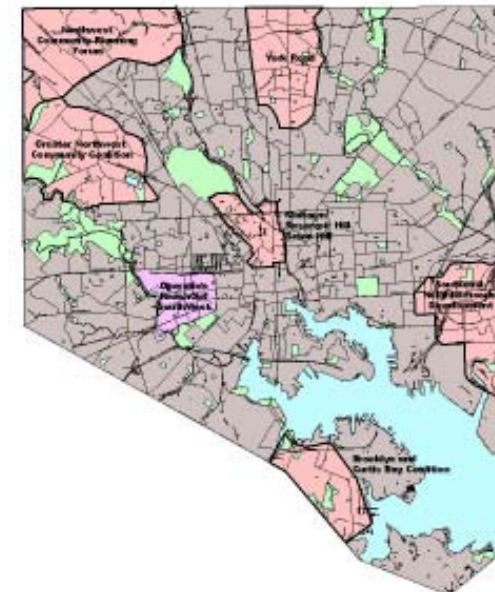
Participation: The planning process is inclusive. Residents and other stakeholders have opportunities for decision-making and for carrying out improvement projects with the City's support.

Perspective: No one issue is the key to a successful plan. Neighborhood revitalization must be comprehensive, addressing many issues and priorities and establishing a long-term framework for future development and change.

In September 2002, the Planning Commission adopted the pilot plan for the SNAP program, the Operation ReachOut Southwest (OROSW) SNAP for a cluster of neighborhoods in Southwest Baltimore.

Following the program's launch, fifteen clusters citywide applied for SNAP designation. In January 2003, six clusters were selected citywide:

- Brooklyn and Curtis Bay
- Midtown/Reservoir Hill/Seton Hill (Midtown)
- Northwest Community Planning Forum (NWCPF)
- Greater Northwest Community Coalition (GNCC)
- Southeast Neighborhoods Development (SEND)
- York Road Partnership



Neighborhood Profile

Planning Process

In 2001, CHAI organized the Northwest Presidents Forum, made up of the Presidents of the Glen, Fallstaff, Cross Country, Cheswolde, and Mt. Washington community associations, to meet regularly to strategize about common concerns.

The Northwest Presidents Forum met with Mayor Martin O'Malley to discuss the need for a comprehensive plan for Northwest Baltimore. In August 2002, Mayor Martin O'Malley announced a new neighborhood planning program, the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan program.

The Presidents Forum submitted a SNAP application in November 2002. In January 2003, Mayor O'Malley announced that the Northwest Community Planning Forum (NWCPF) had been awarded one of six SNAP designations within the 1st round of the program. Over the next several months, the Presidents Forum created a planning steering committee and began to formulate an outline for the planning process and planning topics.

On September 15, 2003, the NWCPF Steering Committee hosted a town meeting to get broad stakeholder input into the planning topics. A diverse and enthusiastic crowd of more than 250 people attended.

Between October 2003 and March 2004, the NWCPF Subcommittees - Housing/Zoning, Recreation and School Facilities, Major Corridors, Environment, Public Safety, Education, and Community Relations/Communication - held dozens of meetings with residents, community stakeholders, and city agencies to develop the SNAP document.

On May 17, 2004, the NWCPF Steering Committee hosted a second town meeting to get broad stakeholder feedback about the plan recommendations and to help prioritize the recommendations. Again, a diverse and enthusiastic crowd was up to the task.

Since the second town meeting, the Steering Committee and subcommittees have begun to implement portions of the plan and explore mechanisms for future implementation of other portions of the plan.



Description of Neighborhood

Northwest Community Planning Forum is bounded by Northern Parkway to the south, the Jones Falls Expressway to the east, and Baltimore County to the north and west. The cluster is centered around Park Heights Avenue, Reisterstown Road, Greenspring Avenue, and Cross Country Boulevard.

Approximately 30,000 people live in the cluster, which is made up of 5 distinct neighborhoods: Glen, Fallstaff, Cross Country, Cheswolde, and Mt. Washington. The neighborhoods of Northwest Baltimore are generally thought of as Baltimore's Jewish neighborhoods. Drive up Park Heights Avenue on a Friday or Saturday evening and it's easy to see why: the sidewalks are filled with Orthodox families going to and from synagogue. Park Heights Avenue is the institutional main street for the region's Jewish population. But the neighborhoods are not just Jewish neighborhoods; they are extremely diverse. There is a large African American population and growing Latino and Asian populations in the area.



The Jewish Community Center is an important neighborhood anchor.

The cluster has a mix of land uses. While most of the land area is residential, there are two major commercial areas (Mt. Washington Village and Reisterstown Road commercial corridor), two business/industrial parks (Seton Business Park and Menlo Industrial Park), and a variety of institutional uses, ranging from the Jewish Community Center to the Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital. The cluster is adjacent to three major regional landmarks: Pimlico Racetrack, Sinai Hospital, and Cylburn Arboretum.

History

Before 1950, approximately one quarter of the land in the neighborhoods of Glen, Fallstaff, Cross Country, Cheswolde, and Mt. Washington was developed. By 1970, with a few exceptions, the neighborhoods were developed as they are today. The local building boom followed national trends. The 1950s marked the largest growth of new housing in United States history. In addition to a booming housing industry, the 1950s ushered in new land use patterns. The car rose to prominence, land uses became more segregated, lawns became very popular, and developments spread out horizontally rather than vertically.

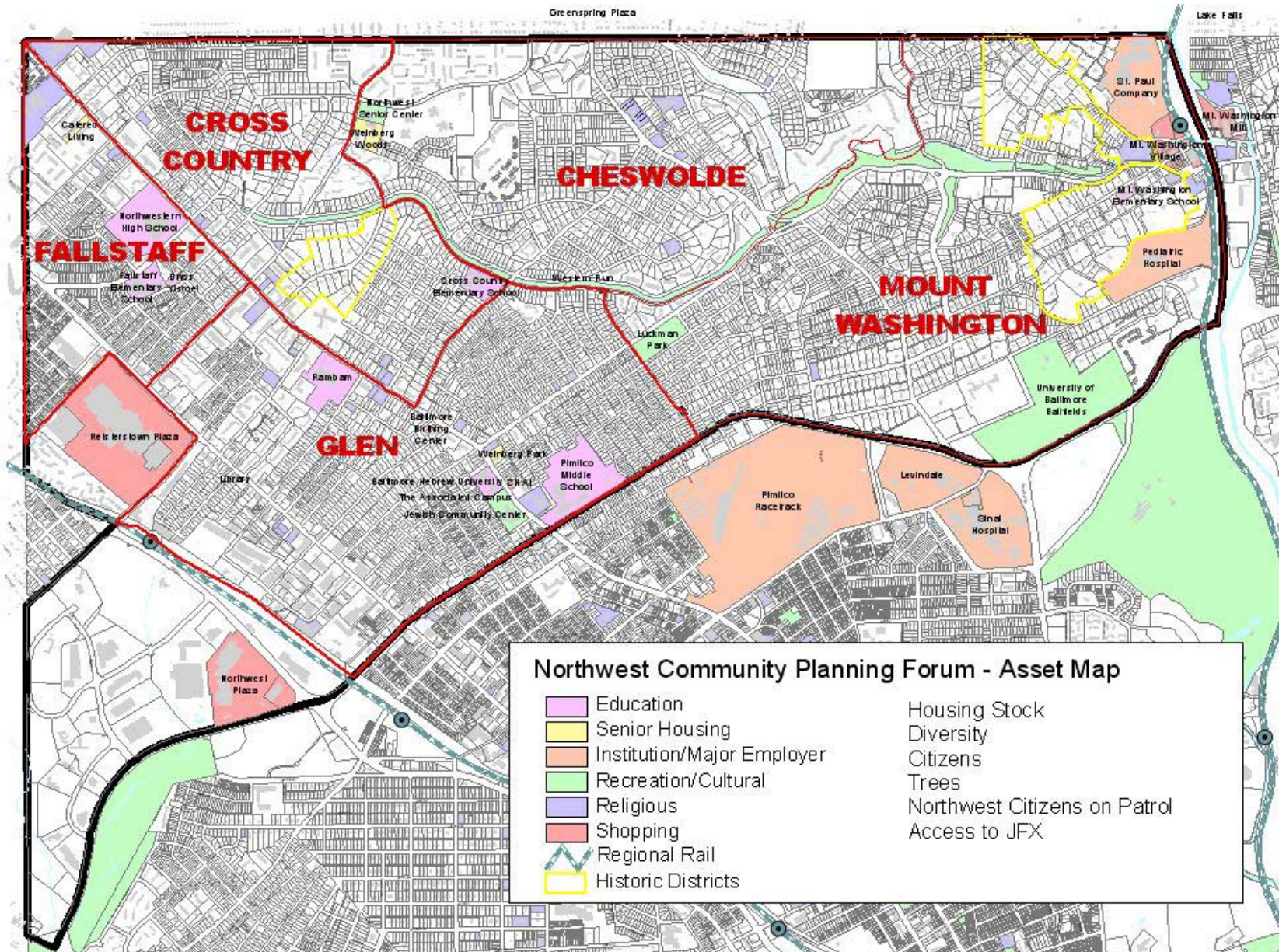
By 1970, three in four households in Northwest Baltimore possessed one car and one in four households possessed two or more cars. Neighborhoods such as Cheswolde and Cross Country were built as exclusively residential neighborhoods and are, for the most part, out of reach to non-residential places except by car.

Post-war builders were capable of leveling vast tracks of land but in Northwest Baltimore the terrain, particularly hills and stream beds, and the existing development patterns along Park Heights Avenue, Reisterstown Road, Greenspring Avenue, and Cross Country Boulevard made it difficult to clear vast sites. Consequently, smaller tracts attracted smaller builders who invested less capital in land consuming street designs and more in a variety of home and lot plans modified for smaller developments. The smaller scale of development tended to keep a few pedestrian friendly features. The City grid was retained, in a modified fashion.

At the same time as the housing market boomed in Northwest Baltimore, the local Jewish community migrated northward and westward because housing in this part of town was affordable, and more importantly, was not restricted. Four of Baltimore's largest congregations built synagogues in Northwest Baltimore between 1950 and 1961 – Baltimore Hebrew, Har Sinai, Oheb Shalom, and Beth El – all along Park Heights Avenue.

Neighborhood Profile

Asset Map



Martin O'Malley, Mayor
City of Baltimore



Otis Rolley, III, Director
Department of Planning

Overview

Existing Conditions

HOUSING

The Northwest Community Planning Forum is generally a bedroom community featuring diverse housing types, ranging from large, single-family, frame houses to high-rise apartment buildings. Most of the area consists of single-family detached and semi-detached homes, but there are concentrations of multi-family housing. High rise multi-family housing can be found along Park Heights Avenue and garden style apartment buildings are clustered throughout the neighborhoods.

COMMERCIAL

There are two commercial areas within the cluster: Reisterstown Road/Patterson Avenue and Mt. Washington Village. Mt. Washington Village and the Reisterstown Road commercial corridor are respectively located at the extreme east and extreme west of the cluster. Mt. Washington Village's concentration of small shops has a very urban character while Reisterstown Plaza, Baltimore City's largest shopping mall, has a very suburban character, but both are attractive community amenities.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Within the cluster there are two parks, but neither park features large open space or active recreation opportunities. Luckman Park is a small, mostly wooded park and the Western Run Stream Bed Park is a linear park that follows the Western Run from Fallstaff Road to the Jones Falls. The cluster is in close proximity to regionally acclaimed open space and wildlife habitat: Cylburn Park and Arboretum.

TRANSPORTATION, STREETSCAPES, GATEWAYS

Park Heights Avenue, Reisterstown Road, Greenspring Avenue, and Northern Parkway connect the cluster with surrounding City and County neighborhoods. The cluster has immediate access to I-695 and I-83.

INDUSTRIAL

The Northwest Corridor Industrial Area and Seton Business Park are located along the western edge of NWCPF.

The recently completed Baltimore Industrial Report evaluated the Northwest Corridor Industrial Area, along the CSX railroad tracks from Fulton Avenue to Fords Lane. The study noted that the Menlo Industrial Park was the only portion of the northwest industrial corridor that has long-term viability. The industrial properties in the rest of the corridor lack the access, size and infrastructure required to be competitive for industrial use. The Menlo Industrial Park is separated from residential communities by commercial properties along Reisterstown Road, but within the southern portions of the Northwest Corridor Industrial Area, many of the businesses are adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

Seton Business Park is industrially zoned, but most of the uses are office uses. Although the business park is not yet built out, there is demand for the remaining spaces, including the relocation of a large church.

Plan Context

The Northwest Community Planning Forum cluster is not an isolated set of neighborhoods. What happens in the adjacent neighborhoods is just as important to the long term health of the area as what happens within the area.

To the south of the plan area, Baltimore City is completing the Park Heights Master Plan. The Park Heights Master Plan is an aggressive plan to transform the patterns of disinvestment that have plagued the Park Heights neighborhood. The plan includes housing, commercial, industrial, and public realm components; a human services component is forthcoming.

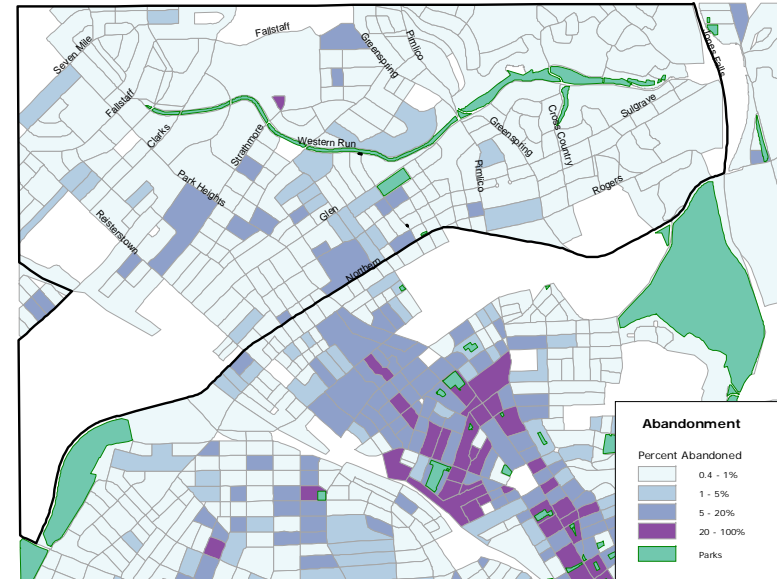
To the north of the plan area, Baltimore County is completing a Pikesville Revitalization Plan. The Pikesville Revitalization Plan is an effort to reinvigorate the commercial corridor along Reisterstown Road. Baltimore County is also in the process of reviewing plans for several major development projects.

Housing

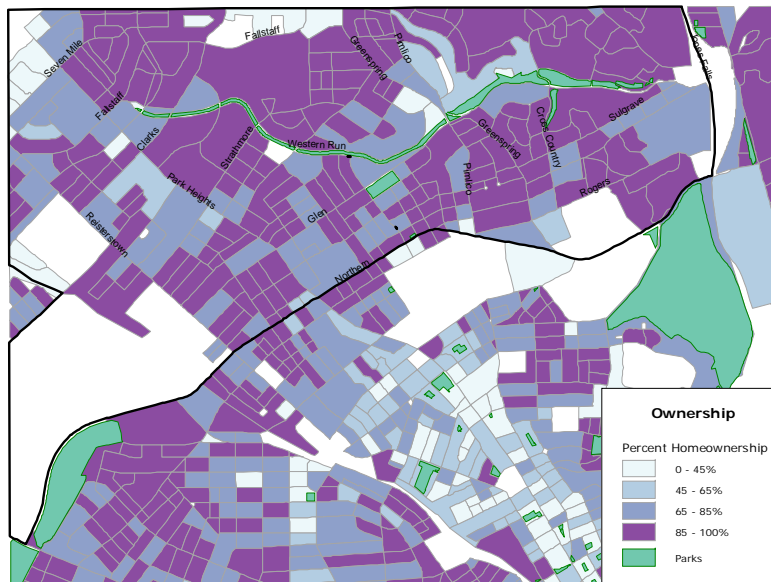
Housing Market

The housing market can be summarized by looking at three key data factors: Abandonment, Homeownership, and Assessed Value. In general, abandonment levels within the cluster are significantly lower than in other portions of Baltimore City, but there is a small concentration of abandonment around Winner Avenue. Similarly, homeownership rates are high throughout the cluster, but are somewhat lower along Park Heights Avenue and Western Run. Interestingly, although homeownership and abandonment rates are fairly even throughout the cluster, there is a marked difference between assessed values in Glen and Fallstaff compared to Cross Country, Cheswolde, and Mt. Washington. This is partially due to differences in housing stock. Glen and Fallstaff have large quantities of semi-detached houses whereas the other neighborhoods do not.

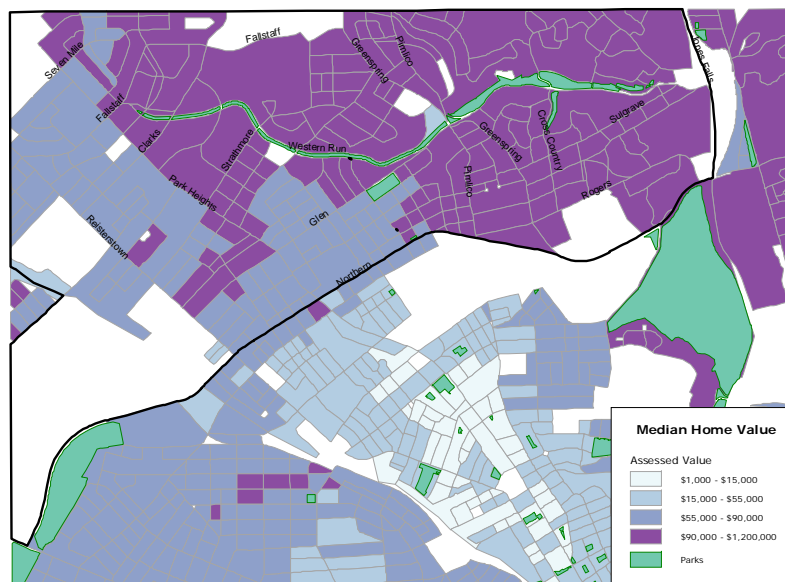
Northwest Community Planning Forum



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Citywide Housing Market Typology

The Baltimore Housing Market Typology uses the three aforementioned data factors to categorize market conditions. The categories help identify appropriate strategies to address particular conditions in a neighborhood.

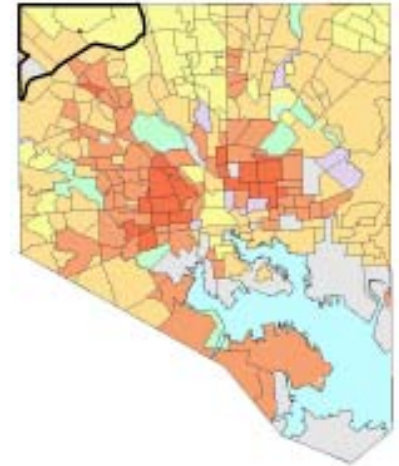
Preservation Areas. Neighborhoods in the “preservation” category represent healthy, attractive areas with high owner-occupancy rates and high property values. The housing stock is well maintained and vacancy and abandonment rates are very low. Cross Country, Cheswolde, and Mt. Washington generally fit the Preservation typology.

Redevelopment Areas. On the other end of the spectrum, “redevelopment” neighborhoods have seen significant deterioration of their housing stock and ended up with dense concentrations of abandoned buildings and vacant lots. Traditional market forces are not working in these areas, nor are they likely to be re-established soon.

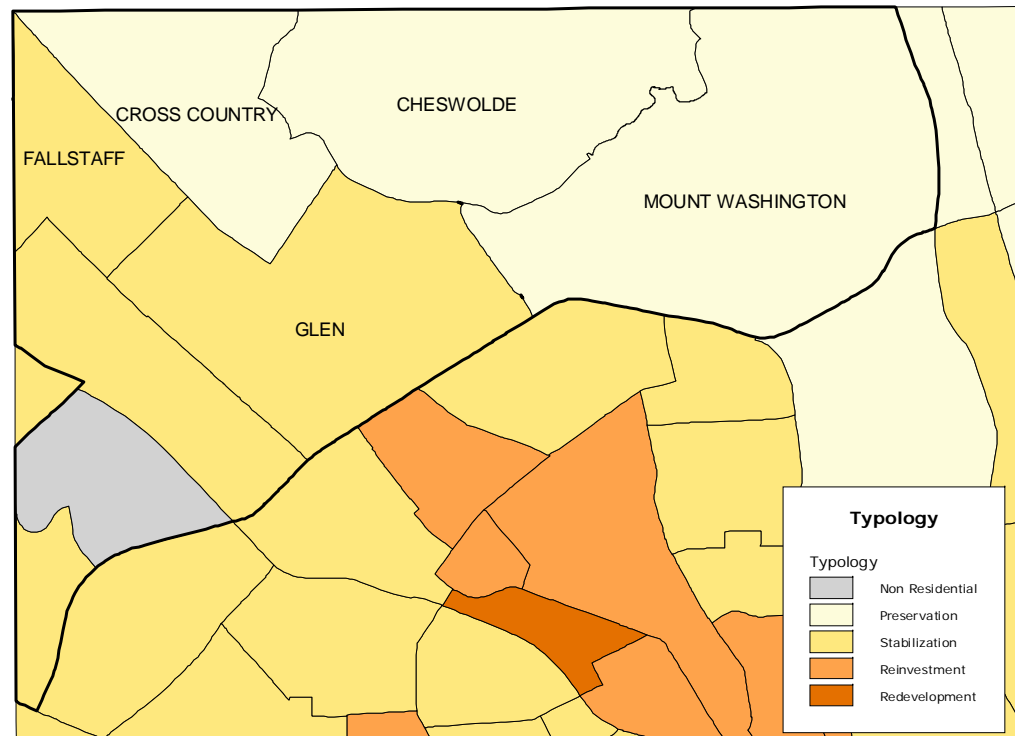
In between these two extremes are the middle neighborhoods - the “stabilization” and “reinvestment” neighborhoods.

Stabilization Neighborhoods. Neighborhoods in the “stabilization” category are mostly found in the outer ring of the city. These neighborhoods have homeownership rates nearly as high as Preservation Areas and vacancy rates nearly as low. However, median values in these neighborhoods are appreciably lower than in Preservation Areas. Glen and Fallstaff generally fit the Stabilization typology.

Reinvestment Neighborhoods. Neighborhoods in the “reinvestment” category find themselves at a crossroads. These neighborhoods have moderate real estate values, average homeownership rates, and substantial vacancy rates, although not as substantial as Redevelopment Areas. Without intervention these neighborhoods could find themselves with widespread vacancies.



Northwest Community Planning Forum



Neighborhoods in the Middle

In Stabilization neighborhoods, the real estate market is often not quite strong enough to respond to scattered problems. As a result, the image of the neighborhood suffers, exaggerating the initial problem. Also, unlike Preservation Areas, many of the homes in Stabilization areas are not maintained and upgraded to the modern standards of the housing market. Unlike Preservation areas, where the housing market is self-propelling, there is a need for modest intervention in the real estate market in these neighborhoods.

Home Improvement Loans

Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. has developed several programs aimed at stimulating the housing market in Glen and Fallstaff. Over the last 5 years, CHAI has offered an average of 25-30 home buyer and home improvement loans per year. The loans serve several purposes:

- Reduce turnover: The terms of the loan encourage homeowners to stay at least ten years to reduce the amount of money that they have to pay back. Also, homeowners are less likely to think of the property as a “starter house” once they have made major improvements to the house.
- Modernize housing stock: As the neighborhood's housing stock ages, it is important to make sure the housing stock remains competitive in the regional housing market.
- Encourage neighbors to make similar improvements: Investment is contagious. No one wants to take the risk of over-improving their property, but if they see their neighbor making improvements, then they will be less hesitant to make an investment.
- Improve curb appeal: Property owners are required to use a portion of the funds for exterior improvements.

Housing Investment Taskforce

With record low interest rates, home equity loans provide property owners with an affordable mechanism for making significant home improvements. The Northwest Community Planning Forum will host a taskforce to explore why more people are not taking advantage of home equity loans.

- Are people unaware of home equity products?
- Do existing home equity products fail to meet people's needs?
- Are people unable to find trustworthy contractors?
- Do people lack confidence in the neighborhood and thus hesitate to invest?
- Are people too busy to plan and implement home improvements?

Depending on why people aren't taking advantage of home equity loans, there may be a relatively simple way to encourage higher levels of investment.



Community Partnership Program

Home improvement loans stimulate the housing market by offering property owners incentives for making improvements beyond basic improvements that are needed to meet the housing code. Code enforcement can be used to make sure all property owners meet minimum code standards. The Community Partnership Program allows residents to assist housing inspectors with code enforcement efforts. Residents are trained to identify code violations. Community associations send letters to property owners with code violations asking the property owner to comply with the code voluntarily. If a property owner does not comply within a reasonable amount of time, the community association refers the violation to the inspectors and the inspectors issue a violation notice. The program has been incredibly successful at increasing code compliance.



Fallstaff Initiative

With support from the Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative, CHAI launched the Fallstaff

Initiative, a multi-faceted approach to neighborhood stabilization with a strong community organizing foundation. Over the last three years the program has established and expanded ESOL classes, provided bilingual homeownership counseling, assisted with job placement, conducted community clean ups, sponsored cross cultural events, facilitated code enforcement, planted trees, etc.

Seniors

The neighborhoods of Northwest Baltimore are nationally recognized as a naturally occurring retirement community (NORC). Many of the apartment buildings, especially along Park Heights Avenue, have large senior populations.

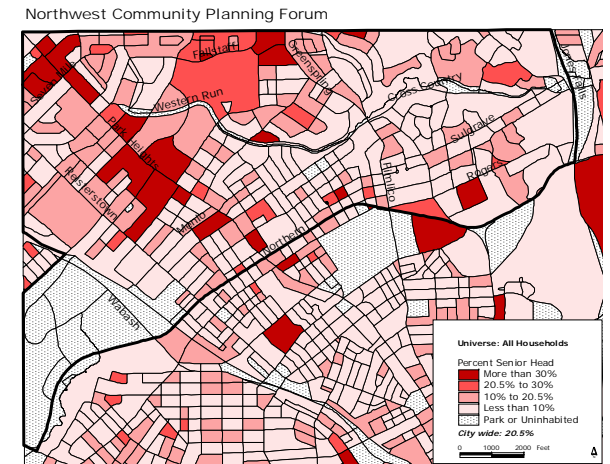
Senior Home Repair

CHAI's Senior Home Repair Program assists Northwest Baltimore homeowners who are ages 62 and older, or have physical disabilities,

and living on fixed incomes. CHAI will pay for qualified emergency repairs and safety improvements. Homeowners may qualify for assistance with roof, gutter and chimney repairs, plumbing & electrical work, railing installation, grab bars and other bathroom modifications, wheelchair ramps, smoke detectors, handyman chores, and more.

Senior Friendly Neighborhoods

As a result of a \$1 million Federal grant that CHAI received in May 2002, the Senior-Friendly Neighborhoods program was created to allow enhanced programs and services for Senior adults living in Northwest Baltimore. Local apartment buildings and community centers host a variety of activities including lectures, discussion groups, social activities and movies. Transportation is provided to grocery stores and cultural institutions. Professionals from Jewish Family Services are available to provide counseling and case management services.



Housing

Park Heights Avenue: Urban Boulevard

The section of Park Heights Avenue within the planning cluster is one of the most attractive major corridors in Baltimore City. Unlike Reisterstown Road and most other major corridors, Park Heights Avenue is not a commercial corridor. Instead, it is best described as a thriving urban boulevard. To preserve the special character of Park Heights Avenue, we must identify and preserve what sets Park Heights Avenue apart from other major corridors.

Land Use

Part of the strength of Park Heights Avenue is the diversity of land uses along the corridor, including a variety of institutional uses. Historically, major corridors were prime locations for fancy estates. Now major corridors are less desirable for single family homes. While some grand estates and other single family homes still exist on Park Heights Avenue, the boulevard has remained successful by becoming the institutional spine of the community. The combination of institutions, from places of worship to high density, high-rise apartment buildings contribute to Park Heights Avenue's vibrancy and grandness.



The Importance of “The “Front”

Park Heights Avenue's collective front yard transforms the street from an ordinary corridor into a grand, green boulevard. Buildings are set back from the street, with green lawns and landscaping between the street and the buildings. Parking in front of buildings is rare, and where it does occur it is screened with landscaping so that it is not visible from the street. Buildings are oriented towards Park Heights Avenue, creating a vibrancy along the street.

Serve Transportation Needs of Pedestrians and Drivers

Park Heights Avenue is used extensively by both pedestrians and drivers and needs to accommodate both sets of needs. Compared to most major corridors there are limited curbs cuts - sidewalk interruptions for driveways - on Park Heights Avenue. Parking is accommodated from the sides or rear of buildings. By limiting curb cuts, pedestrians, particularly those with baby strollers or wheel chairs, have more continuity, and both pedestrians and drivers face fewer distractions.

Committee for Park Heights Avenue

In addition to the appropriate land uses and urban design, Park Heights Avenue is as attractive as it is due to the dedication and hard work of the Committee for Park Heights Avenue. The Committee takes on a combination of advocacy, beautification, and maintenance roles. The Committee advocated for the recent repaving and is responsible for the garden nodes, decorative bus stop signs and benches, and tree planting and watering. In addition, the Committee hires someone to empty the trash cans six times a week, remove weeds, pick up trash, remove illegal signs, etc.

Housing Recommendations

Ensure that all property is well maintained and attractive.

Enforce maintenance standards by partnering with Code Enforcement.

- Educate residents about the Housing Code. See “Community Relations and Communication - Improve communication between community associations and neighborhood residents”
- Encourage and support each neighborhood in participating in the Community Partnership Program.
- Provide Housing and Community Development Code Enforcement Division with a list of 5 problem properties from each neighborhood each month.

Encourage property owners to invest in their properties beyond minimum standards described in the housing code.

- Host a roundtable/taskforce to seek recommendations and partners.
 - Community Representatives
 - CHAI
 - Community Development “experts”
 - Financial Institutions
 - Contractors
- Support CHAI programs that target resources towards Stabilization neighborhoods (see Housing Market Typology).
 - Home Improvement Loans – modernization, rehabilitation, curb appeal, etc.
 - Intervention Buying
 - Community Organizing
 - Block Projects
 - Senior Home Repair Day, Weatherization Day
 - Door-to-Door Program
 - Homebuyer Loans
 - Homeownership Counselling

Ensure that land uses are appropriate and attractive.

Preserve Park Heights Avenue as an “Urban Boulevard.”

- Maintain front setbacks.
- Prohibit parking in front setback.
- Limit curb cuts.
- Uses should have a “front door” facing Park Heights Avenue.
- Maintain diversity of uses, including “institutional” uses, such as places of worship, schools, multi-family housing, and service providers; prohibit commercial uses.
- Encourage long range “campus” planning, where appropriate.
- Continue the activities of the Committee for Park Heights Avenue
- Promote existing sign standards.

Ensure that development projects are compatible with the integrity and stability of the neighborhood.

- Design: While diversity of building design is not unwelcome, the community has the right to expect that developers and builders will create high quality structures that are appropriate to the character of the neighborhood.
- Open Space: Open space should be preserved where possible, as a visual, environmental, and recreational asset.
- Traffic: Any increases in traffic volume should be accompanied by appropriate improvements to the transportation network.
- Community review: Community associations should have the opportunity to review and comment on all development proposals.

Promote infill development that complements existing neighborhoods.

- Additions to existing homes that are visible from the street should be reviewed by the community.
- Consider scale, style, building materials, etc. of existing housing stock when planning new development.
- Utilize crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques when planning new development.
- Disturb environment as little as possible.
- Preserve specimen trees and other special features.
- Do not disturb infrastructure or landscaping adjacent to construction site.

Commercial

Reisterstown Road

In contrast to Park Heights Avenue, which is one of the most attractive major corridors in Baltimore, most people characterize Reisterstown Road as one of the most *unattractive* major corridors. The negative images of Reisterstown Road are beginning to change with new investment at Reisterstown Plaza and surrounding businesses. By identifying what makes Reisterstown Road unattractive, there is an opportunity to further change the image of the corridor. Is it the land uses, particularly the automotive-related uses, that make it unattractive? Is it the suburban style of the corridor, particularly the orientation to drivers rather than pedestrians? Is it the visual clutter of signs, utility poles, driveways, trash, etc.? Is it the lack of amenities such as landscaping, trash cans, fences, etc? Probably all of the above mentioned features contribute to the character of Reisterstown Road.



Streetscape

Reisterstown Road lacks any visual cohesion. A

streetscape project, from Northern Parkway to the County Line (between Fallstaff and Glengyle), will provide visual cohesion for the public right of way. Due to the variations in the character of Reisterstown Road, the streetscape project should have different components in the portion from Northern Parkway to Patterson Avenue and from Patterson Avenue to the County Line. The streetscape project should also include Patterson Avenue as an important arm of the Reisterstown Road commercial corridor and a critical link to the metro station. In addition to providing visual cohesion, the streetscape project will improve pedestrian amenities.

Design Guidelines

The streetscape project will create visual cohesion for the public right of way. Design guidelines will provide an opportunity to introduce visual cohesion among the signs, storefronts, landscaping, parking and other elements of the businesses along Reisterstown Road.



Incentives and Enforcement

A carrot and stick approach is probably the most effective way to get businesses to improve the appearance of their properties. The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) and Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc (CHAI) are both able to assist businesses in making improvements, but they have limited staff capacity to do the time-consuming outreach that is required. With assistance from the Planning Department and community representatives, it should be possible to do door-to-door outreach. For those businesses that don't make improvements voluntarily, code enforcement is necessary. Coordinated multi-agency enforcement "sweeps," such as those conducted in restaurants a year or two ago, are much more effective at addressing violations than efforts by a single agency.

Commercial

Space Needs

Many of the automotive-related businesses are unattractive, but an automotive use does not have to be unattractive. One of the biggest reasons that many of the automotive uses are unattractive is that the business does not properly fit on the property. Among the problems with businesses that are too large for their space are: cars over-flow into the right of way; cars are jockeyed onto residential streets; there is no space for fencing and landscaping, both in the front along Reisterstown Road, and in the back and/or side next to residential properties.



Compare the photo on the left where cars are parked adjacent to, and possibly on top of, the sidewalk, with the photo on the right where the parking lot is set back from the street and is partially screened by trees and shrubs.



Land Uses

Over the long term, to significantly change the character of Reisterstown Road means thinking about land use and design, not just beautification and code enforcement. Some of the existing land uses along Reisterstown Road have negative implications for the surrounding residential communities. Changing the land use and design guidelines for those portions of Reisterstown Road that are adjacent to residential properties would minimize the spillover of nuisance behaviors, particularly noises and smells.



Commercial Recommendations

Improve appearance, functionality, and uses along Reisterstown Road.

Streetscape Reisterstown Road from Northern Parkway to County Line and Patterson Avenue from Reisterstown Road to Wabash Avenue.

Work with individual businesses to create positive change.

- Create team of community and government representatives to go door-to-door offering businesses assistance and seeking aesthetic and other improvements in return.
 - Trees/landscaping
 - Signage
 - Facades
 - Fences
 - Trash
 - Truck routes
- Encourage commercial entities to partner with schools, institutions and community associations to foster training and workforce development, including after-school programs.

Enforce rules and regulations.

- Create a team of community and government representatives to monitor and enforce violations.
 - Community
 - Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development – Zoning Code, Building Code
 - Baltimore City Health Department
 - Baltimore City Police Department
 - Maryland Department of the Environment
 - Baltimore Development Corporation
 - Baltimore Planning Department

Amend urban renewal plan/zoning laws

- Create design guidelines.
- Restrict 'nuisance' uses adjacent to residential areas. Permit greater variety of uses in area adjacent to industrial area.
- Create site requirements for businesses, especially auto-related businesses
 - Screening, especially adjacent to residential properties
 - Setbacks, especially adjacent to residential properties
 - Minimum site requirements and/or square footage for proper functioning of uses on site

Institute site plan review for new and used auto lots.

Open Space and Recreation

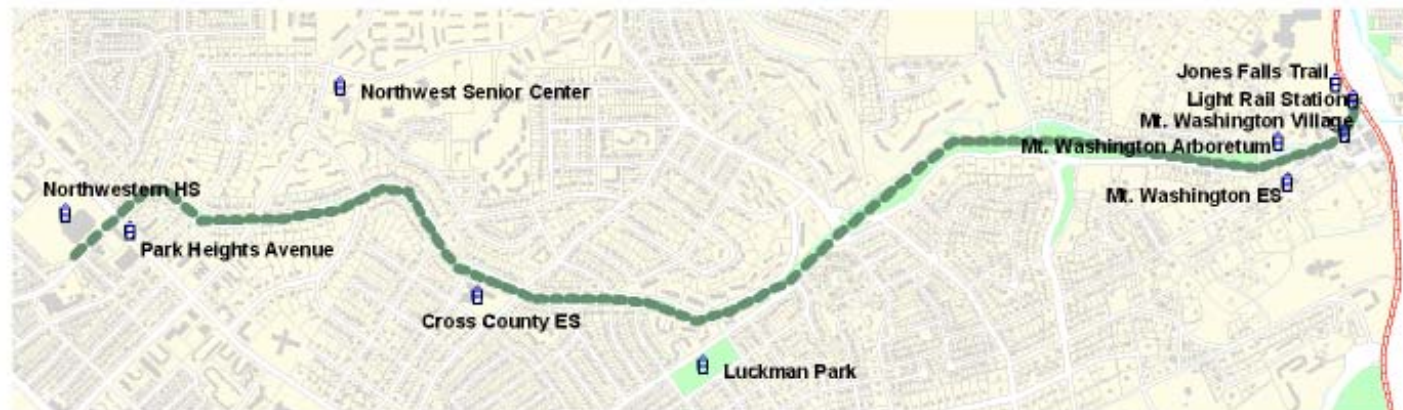
The Northwest cluster of neighborhoods has limited open space. Luckman Park and the Western Run Stream Valley are the only public parks within the area. Although existing open space is limited, this plan recommends preserving and enhancing existing open space rather than creating new open spaces. With infrastructure and programming improvements, the existing open spaces can serve many of the recreational needs of the community. Also, recreation opportunities exist throughout the neighborhoods in places other than parks, most notably on school grounds.



The State Department of Natural Resources recommends that open space make up 10% of each jurisdiction's land mass. Baltimore City exceeds this regulation. However, this portion of Baltimore City falls extremely short - with only 2% open space. Given the limited *quantity* of open space in this area, and the fact that this plan does not recommend increasing the amount of open space, it is extremely important to provide *quality* open space.

Western Run Greenway Trail

The Western Run Greenway is a proposed path system that will link the Mt. Washington, Cheswolde, Cross Country, Glen and Fallstaff communities with important neighborhood assets such as Northwestern High School, Luckman Park, Mt. Washington Village Commercial District, Mt. Washington Elementary School, Mt. Washington Arboretum, Mt. Washington Light Rail, and the Planned Jones Falls Trail system. The Western Run Greenway will improve an existing linear park from a visual and environmental asset into an important recreational system for communities in northwestern Baltimore. The greenway will be a unifying element for the entire cluster that creates an image and identity for the area and has a favorable impact on the desirability of the area.





Luckman Park

Luckman Park is literally a hidden treasure. Geographically, the park is nestled into the fabric of the neighborhood. On the one hand, this location provides for a serene, safe setting away from the hustle and bustle of commercial corridors. On the other hand, because it is removed from the major corridors, many residents do not encounter the park on a regular basis and some do not even know of the park's existence.

Nonetheless, the space is a unique oasis, a one-block square park with remarkable diversity of use and vegetation. With cutbacks in funding from the Department of Recreation, the need to maintain this Park becomes the responsibility of the neighbors who benefit from it. With increased advertising and programming, the Friends of Luckman Park expect to educate more residents about the resources that the park has to offer.

School Facilities

With few recreation/open spaces in the Northwest neighborhoods, it is important to utilize all potential opportunities. School buildings and grounds have many of the facilities – fields, tracks, pools, gymnasiums - that are needed for recreational activities, but these facilities are used for only a portion of each day and a portion of each year. By partnering with the schools, the community can expand the number of recreational opportunities. The schools also benefit from the partnership because more people are engaged in the school environment and community residents can advocate and fundraise to upgrade facilities.



Open Space

Public and private open spaces exist throughout the neighborhood. These spaces should be preserved as open space and enhanced to serve as community assets. Some open spaces, such as the median strips at the Glen Avenue Fire Station, could provide an attractive amenity if landscaped. Other open spaces, such as the space at Reisterstown Road and Fallstaff Road, serve as a community gateway. The University of Baltimore ballfields provide much needed recreation opportunities.

Open Space and Recreation

Recreation Facilities Inventory

PARKS	ATTRIBUTES	ACCESS	CONDITION
Luckman Park	Recreation Center	Key-Friends of Luckman Park	No kitchen, sound system Poor lighting, HVAC, bathrooms, furniture
	Pavillion	Available	Roof in disrepair
	Playground	Available	Good
	Tennis Courts	Available	Good
Western Run	3 Mile Linear Park Stream		Trash, erosion
Northwestern H.S.	Indoor Pool	Special Arrangement	Ok
	Track	Available	Good
	Tennis Courts	Available	Very poor - not usable
	Basketball Courts	Available	Very poor - not usable
	Gym	Special Arrangement	Ok
Pimlico M.S.	Fields	Available	Poor
	Fields	Available	Poor
	Gym	Special Arrangement	Ok
	Track		No longer exists
	Tennis Courts		No longer exists
Cross Country E. S.	Playground	No longer exists	Removed by Health Dept.
Mt. Washington E.S.	Playground	Available	Scheduled to be replaced
Fallstaff E.S.	Playground	Available	New

Open Space Recommendations

Create Western Run Greenway.

Create greenway trail along Western Run.

- Coordinate with community to research and establish preliminary trail route.
- Create typical cross sections and preliminary engineering with cost estimates.
- Identify funding source for construction and create final engineering drawings.
- Construct trail.

Conduct regular stream clean ups.

Improve Luckman Park.

Improve functionality of the park.

- Improve security in the park through improved lighting, signage, and thinning tree branches, brush, and trees.
- Improve amenities in the park by adding or improving trash cans, water fountains, benches, spigot for watering plants, and exercise path.
- Improve maintenance of the park by improving trash pick up and leaf removal, painting railings and benches, and power washing walkways.

Improve programming in the park.

- Family Fests (2/yr)
- Mt. Washington Improvement Assn Annual Picnic
- Monthly Clean up (summer)
- Monthly coffee hour (summer)
- Playgroup
- Movie nights
- Tennis (6 week program)
- Summer camp (run by church group)
- Senior Friendly Neighborhoods

Implement long-range physical improvements.

- Fix roof of pavilion and improve lighting surrounding pavilion.
- Improve Recreation Center by upgrading restrooms, improving lighting, heating, and cooling, enlarging the facility to add a kitchen, replacing the existing furniture, and adding a sound system.
- Create an amphitheater with a stage and seating for 100 people.

Open Space and Recreation

Recommendations

Use school facilities as recreation spaces.

Set up program of activities.

- Identify opportunities for recreation at school sites.
- Identify demand for recreation at school sites by conducting a community survey.
- Do fundraising to pay for use of schools and supervision of activities.
- Create schedule of activities.
- Advertise programs.

Identify joint community-school support to implement and maintain long-range physical improvements needed at schools.

- New tennis courts at Northwestern HS
- Upgrade fields, tennis courts, and track at Pimlico MS
- Upgrade playground at Mt. Washington ES
- Upgrade playground at Cross Country ES and relocate further away from building
- Create playground with tot lots at Fallstaff ES

Preserve and beautify open spaces.

Beautify public spaces.

- Median – Glen Avenue Fire Station
- Intersection – Greenspring, Cross Country, Pimlico
- Pimlico Middle School
- Inventory and expand beautification efforts in collaboration with Dr. Michael Sherlock and other interested community members.

Inventory private open space and preserve and beautify spaces, as appropriate.

- University of Baltimore Ballfields
- Triangle – Fallstaff and Reisterstown Road

Transportation, Streetscapes, and Gateways

Safety First

The plan focuses on unsafe traffic patterns along the major corridors, particularly along Cross Country Boulevard and Greenspring Avenue. Both streets encourage drivers to speed, through a combination of limited traffic lights and wide lanes, and provide no relief for pedestrians. A one-mile stretch of Park Heights Avenue from Northern Parkway to Clarks Lane has six traffic lights whereas a one-mile stretch of Cross Country Boulevard from Clarks Lane to Greenspring has only two traffic lights, one at each end. Given this disparity, it is no surprise that many drivers choose Cross Country Boulevard and Greenspring Avenue. Drivers choose these streets to avoid traffic lights, but also because they can pick up speed between traffic lights. The result is highway speeds on local streets. The plan recommends slowing traffic as well as offering specific measures to accommodate pedestrians at locations such as schools and synagogues where there are high pedestrian volumes.

Cross Country Boulevard

A high incidence of accidents near the intersection of Cross Country Boulevard and Taney Road at Cross Country Elementary School has been witnessed by residents for many years, though not all incidents are reported to the Police. Cars trying to exit either side of Taney Road are struck by vehicles traveling east/west on Cross Country Boulevard. Drivers' sight-line is frequently obscured by traffic activity around the school, or by curves in Cross Country Boulevard, e.g., Cross Country Boulevard at Strathmore Road. There are no mechanisms for controlling the speed of traffic on Cross Country Boulevard near the school other than speed limit signs, which are routinely ignored.

The volume and speed of traffic on Cross Country Boulevard create unsafe conditions for both pedestrians and vehicles, especially during morning and evening rush hours. The dual problems of traffic volume and speed are exacerbated during the parents' morning drop-off of children at school. Cars parked in front of homes on the south side of Cross Country Boulevard are frequently struck by speeding vehicles that lose control on the curves (e.g., one homeowner had two cars totaled in five years).



Cross Country Blvd. from Kelly Avenue to Glen Avenue and the Firehouse has no sidewalk. People must walk in the roadway from Kelly Avenue to Greenspring Avenue, from Greenspring Avenue westward toward the Firehouse, and then cross Cross Country Boulevard, where there is no crosswalk, to get to the sidewalk on the other side of Cross Country Boulevard. Adding a sidewalk would complement the proposed Western Run Greenway Trail and greatly improve pedestrian safety.

Northern Parkway

Original construction of Northern Parkway as an intra-city/county connector included no provision for "amenities" that make the roadway safe for pedestrians, drivers, and adjacent communities.

The Parkway was built extremely close to adjacent communities without any buffer for houses facing or proximate to the road, leading to numerous problems: unacceptable noise levels, degradation of housing and neighborhoods, unsafe conditions for pedestrians. Sidewalks are too narrow and lie right next to the roadway. Various forms of protection have never been introduced: e.g., crosswalks at intersections.

Transportation

Greenspring Avenue

Most drivers exceed the speed limit on the entire length of Greenspring Avenue from Willow Glen Drive to Cross Country Boulevard, frequently traveling at 15 to 20 miles over the speed limit. Many drivers assume that Greenspring Avenue in the City is a *four-lane highway*, as it is in the County just inside the Beltway, rather than a *residential street*. They travel 50+ mph on the County portion of the road going south, and do not change their “mindset” when they move into the residential portions of the roadway, in either the County or the City. Similarly, they travel 50+ mph on Northern Parkway, another four-lane highway, and do not change their “mindset” when they turn onto Greenspring Avenue going north.

The speed limit from Cross Country Boulevard to Willow Glen Drive is currently 30mph, but typical rush hour speeds appear to be 45 to 50 mph. For morning southbound traffic on this portion of Greenspring Avenue, speed begins to accelerate at Cheswolde Avenue, and continues as cars head southward, reaching top speeds at Pinebrush and Steele Roads. For evening northbound traffic coming uphill from the five-way intersection with Cross Country Boulevard and Pimlico Road, cars are already speeding by the time they reach Steele and Pinebrush Roads. Entering Greenspring Avenue from side streets during rush hour is dangerous and can take an extraordinary amount of time and the problem has worsened in the past year. This issue crosses jurisdictional lines and should be addressed in coordination with Baltimore County.



Traffic islands, like those on Pimlico Road, could change the character of Greenspring Avenue and significantly reduce speeding.

Greenspring Avenue lacks sidewalks, or sufficiently wide sidewalks, in most stretches of the road, e.g., from Willow Glen Drive to Cheswolde Road, near Shomrei Emunah, and along the downhill stretch in front of Mount Washington Apartments to the intersection with Cross Country Boulevard. Lack of sidewalks makes walking dangerous or impossible in several areas. Orthodox Jewish residents who walk to synagogue on Shabat have to push baby carriages in the street.

Road conditions and speed of traffic threaten safety of pedestrians and drivers, especially on Shabbat, near Shomrei Emunah at Cheswolde Road and Agudath Israel at Pinebrush Road, and during the week at Torah Center and Agudath Israel. There are no mechanisms, markings, or signage to protect pedestrians crossing Greenspring to and from synagogues and the new Torah Center at Greenspring and Taney. The curved hill rising from Willow Glen Drive to Cheswolde Road creates hazard for pedestrians when drivers are speeding and/or not anticipating pedestrians crossing Greenspring. Unfortunately, the pedestrian-controlled stoplight at Kelly Avenue and South Road in Mt. Washington Village is not a viable solution for Greenspring Avenue near the synagogues because Orthodox residents cannot push the control button on Shabat.

Last, but not least, the projected development of Pimlico Racetrack, Anne Arundel Quarry, and Bonnie View Golf Course will mean an enormous increase in volume of traffic on Greenspring Avenue. Greenspring Avenue was constructed to handle a certain amount of traffic. That volume was exceeded long ago because of its connection with Route 83 via Northern Parkway. Drivers need another means of accessing Route 83 and getting to the Beltway.

Reisterstown Road

Traffic Study

Between Fords Lane and Fallstaff Road, Reisterstown Road has several problematic traffic patterns, including overall traffic flow and specific intersections. Some of these problematic traffic patterns have been escalated by the additional traffic in the area due to the revitalization of the Plaza and should be addressed by the Department of Transportation to complement the significant private investment at the Plaza.



Left: Sidewalk in front of Dept of Health and Mental Hygiene is not wide enough to meet heavy pedestrian volumes from Metro station to the Plaza and Reisterstown Road.



Right: Pedestrians are not accommodated at railroad crossing.



Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station

Patterson Avenue is the link between the Reisterstown Plaza Metro Station and the Reisterstown Plaza Shopping Center, Reisterstown Road, and the Glen and Fallstaff neighborhoods. Patterson Avenue does not have the appropriate pedestrian amenities for a street that serves as a direct link between a transit station and surrounding land uses.

Crossing Patterson Avenue, near the metro station or at Reisterstown Road, is extremely difficult and dangerous. The photo on the right illustrates the “safe” path from the Metro Station to the Plaza. However, most pedestrians jaywalk across Patterson Avenue and cut through the parking lots (future pad sites). There are opportunities to make this path shorter (pedestrian bridge), safer (improve crossing of Patterson Avenue and railroad), and/or more pedestrian friendly (widen sidewalks, add landscaping, etc.).

Improve Road Conditions

While many of the streets within the cluster are in desperate need of repaving, it is especially important that major corridors are maintained. Park Heights Avenue was recently repaved, but Cross Country Boulevard, Glen Avenue, and portions of Northern Parkway are in complete disrepair. These streets are used extensively to get to and between neighborhoods in Northwest Baltimore. All three streets are bus routes.

Transportation Recommendations

Improve safety along major corridors.

Cross Country Blvd

- Install a stop light and re-draw pedestrian crosswalks at the intersection of Cross Country Boulevard and Taney Road.
- Create drop off and pick up area for Cross Country Elementary School.
- Construct a sidewalk for pedestrians on the north (Western Run) side of Cross Country Boulevard from Kelly Avenue to the Firehouse and introduce white striping to provide jogger / bicycle lanes in both directions on Cross Country Boulevard between Kelly Avenue and Greenspring Avenue, and continuing up Greenspring Avenue.
- Conduct speed limit enforcement campaign.

Northern Parkway

- Provide crosswalks and pedestrian cross-buttons at all intersections that now have stoplights.
- Conduct visibility studies at side street intersections with Northern Parkway from Greenspring Avenue to Reisterstown Road.
- Examine condition of planted medians with respect to safety of cars attempting to enter Northern Parkway from cross streets where there are no traffic controls.
- Reduce accessibility from Northern Parkway to interior / side streets. Study entire area to determine which side streets could be closed to create cul-de-sacs, or changed to one way south-bound to limit access from Northern Parkway.

Greenspring Avenue

- Reduce speeding along Greenspring Avenue.
 - Engineer the intersection at Taney and Hanson with an island and stop signs on Greenspring Avenue (see re-engineered Pimlico Road from Cross Country Blvd to Northern Pkwy for an excellent model).
 - Introduce traffic-calming structures (e.g., planted medians at widest points of the roadway – Steele Road to Cross Country Boulevard) and visual devices (e.g., striped parking lanes and bicycle lanes to reduce width of roadway), and thus counter the idea that Greenspring Avenue is a freeway.
 - Conduct speed limit enforcement campaign.
- Alert drivers to curves in road. Reposition (elevate) “curve” signs to make them visible to drivers.
- Install sidewalks.
- Install appropriate traffic device to allow pedestrians to safely cross the street near prominent synagogues, Shomrei Emunah (at Cheswolde Road) and Agudath Israel (at Pinebrush Road).
- Improve street lighting on the east side of the street to improve drivers’ visibility of pedestrians at night.
- Work with Baltimore County officials and the State Highway Administration to improve the access to Greenspring/695 to encourage drivers to go north on Greenspring Avenue to access Rt. 83 rather than cut through Cheswolde to access Rt. 83 via Northern Parkway.
- Work with Baltimore County officials to create another point of entrance and egress for Route 83.

Improve road conditions along major corridors.

Repave Cross Country Blvd from Fallstaff Road to Greenspring Avenue.

Repave Glen Avenue from Highgate Drive to the Glen Avenue Fire Station.

Repave Northern Parkway from Reisterstown Road to I-83.

Improve traffic patterns along Reisterstown Road from Fords Lane to Fallstaff Road.

Conduct traffic study along Reisterstown Road from Fords Lane to Fallstaff Road.

- Study flow of traffic, particularly number and location of traffic lights.
- Study intersection with Fords Lane, particularly left turn movement from southbound Reisterstown Road onto eastbound Fords Lane.
- Study intersection with Patterson Avenue/Bancroft Road, particularly pedestrian crossings and through traffic along Patterson Avenue onto Bancroft Road and vice versa.
- Study intersection with Fallstaff Road, particularly parked cars along Reisterstown Road.

Improve pedestrian access to Reisterstown Road from Metro Station and vice versa.

Environment

Storm Drains

At the initial town meeting, problems associated with clogged storm drains were among the most common complaints. Clogged storm drains have a major impact on street and basement flooding as well as the cleanliness of the Inner Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay. Grass cutters, including City crews, routinely blow piles of grass into the street. When it rains, the grass clogs the drains.

Education is one of the best means for combatting clogged storm drains. Stenciling “Chesapeake Bay Drainage - Don’t Litter” and similar educational messages on storm drains will help educate residents about the effects of their actions. Engaging students in the stenciling project is important because they are the future of the community. The project is a great way for them to meet their service hour requirements and learn about the Bay at the same time.



Environment Recommendations

Improve Sanitation.

Create an Adopt-a-Storm Drain Program.

- Create an Adopt-a-Storm Drain Program.
 - Individuals volunteer to pick up trash outside and around storm drains.
 - Community associations coordinate the program.
 - DPW provides safety tips and tools.
 - Mayor’s Office and businesses provide incentives and awards.
- Recruit high school students and other volunteers to stencil “Don’t Dump – Chesapeake Bay Drainage” on local storm drains.
- Conduct sanitation education campaign as a project of the NW School-Community Partnership.

Create a mechanism for regular street cleaning.

Pursue one or more of the following:

- Conduct an education campaign related to storage and disposal of trash, littering, and dumping.
- Raise money to furnish sturdy trash cans to all needy - whether financial or otherwise challenged - residents.
- Expand the adopt-a-drain program to include picking up trash along the entire curb, not just at the drain.
- Encourage students to pick up trash for service hour credits.
- Encourage dog walkers to pick up trash while they pick up after their dog.
- Raise money to hire a hokey man.
- Schedule mechanical street cleaning.
- Educate City garbage collectors to pick up spills they generate.

Education

Northwest School Community Partnership

In 1997, CHAI, the community development agency of The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, formed the Northwest School-Community Partnership to promote greater cooperation between residents and neighborhood public schools. The Partnership soon became a vehicle for people in the community—principals, administrators, neighborhood association presidents, police, city council members and concerned parents—to work together to enhance public education.

The list of Partnership accomplishments over the last seven years includes: raising \$50,000 for books for school libraries, opening a school-based Health Center at Northwestern High School, and various beautification projects and multicultural events. In addition, the Northwest School Community Partnership succeeded in its advocacy efforts to have Fallstaff reestablished as an elementary school, thereby eliminating overcrowding at Cross Country and reducing the need for bussing.



School Facilities and Zoning

To relieve the overcrowding at Cross Country Elementary School, Fallstaff Middle School was recently converted to Fallstaff Elementary School. The students who were attending Fallstaff Middle School are now attending Pimlico Middle School. Even with the additional students from Fallstaff Middle School, the student population of Pimlico Middle School falls far short of the state-rated capacity for the building. The school has major capital needs, such as boilers and windows, but the state will not fund these improvements as long as the school remains under-utilized. To improve the utilization rate, a portion of the school could be used for another purpose and/or additional students could attend Pimlico Middle School. As a magnet school, Pimlico Middle School would have a higher enrollment because students would attend the school from throughout the City and more Northwest parents would choose to send their kids there if the reputation of the school were improved. Given its prominent location on Northern Parkway, the school makes a great location as a magnet middle school, and would also work as a site for co-locating other facilities.

Creating a Learning Community

School and community stakeholders around Pimlico Middle School, the feeder elementary schools, and Northwestern High School will be participating in a conference designed to elicit ongoing commitments to create a learning community. Many parents are comfortable with the academic performance and learning environment of the area elementary schools, but are wary about sending their children to Pimlico Middle School and Northwestern High School. In order to keep residents in the neighborhood and students in the public school system, improvements need to be made at the middle and high school levels. In addition, efforts are being made to convert Cross Country and Fallstaff to K-8 and increase the resources at each school.



Education

School Facilities: Maintenance and Modernization

Like most schools in Baltimore City, the schools in Northwest Baltimore have tremendous maintenance needs. The maintenance needs can be divided into four broad categories:

- (1) systemics, such as new windows, boilers, roofs, plumbing, etc.,
- (2) major repairs, require special expertise or materials
- (3) minor repairs, can be performed by handyman
- (4) curriculum-related, such as science labs, athletic facilities, etc.

The school system does not have the financial capacity to make all of the improvements that need to be made. In previous years, most of the school system's limited capital budget has been used for major renovations of one or two schools. Now, a large portion of the system's capital budget is used for systemic improvements throughout the system. But the needs still far surpass the available funding. The Northwest School Community Partnership has hired a part time staff person dedicated to creating business and community partnerships with the goal of recruiting additional resources, both physical and programmatic.

At the new Fallstaff Elementary School, the community successfully advocated for a new playground. However, the pavement surrounding the playground is in disrepair, making it unsafe for kids to use the new playground.

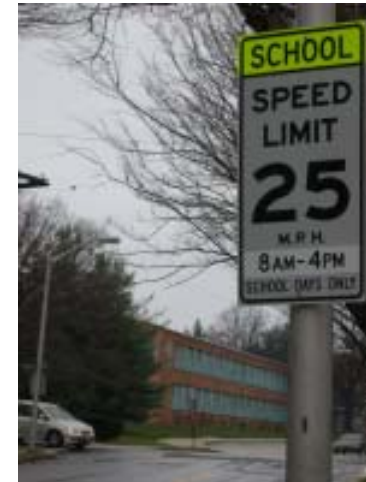


Safe Routes to School

The goal of Safe Routes to School is to increase the number of children who walk or bike to school to improve neighborhood quality of life and public health. For parents and students to feel comfortable walking to school, the neighborhood must be safe, attractive, and pedestrian-friendly. These same features improve the quality of life for all residents, not just the students. By reducing the number of children who are dropped off and picked up, there is a significant reduction in traffic congestion, further improving quality of life for everyone.

Increasing the number of students who walk and bike to school also has a tremendous impact on public health. Due to a sedentary lifestyle, today's school children will be the first generation not to have a longer life expectancy than their parents. Establishing and maintaining an active lifestyle is the easiest way to exercise regularly. Whereas walking to school has a positive effect on public health, conversely, driving to school has a detrimental effect on public health. Schools where most people arrive by car have measurably worse air quality than the surrounding area. Air quality has been measured to have a significant impact on health, particularly asthma rates.

The Safe Routes to School program utilizes a multi-faceted strategy that combines engineering, enforcement, education, and encouragement to increase the number of students who walk or bike to school.



School speed limit signs are the first step towards making it safer for students to walk to school.

Education Recommendations

Improve the standards of excellence at Mt. Washington, Cross Country, Fallstaff, Pimlico, and Northwestern.

Strengthen the NW School Community Partnership as a coalition of government, school, community, non-profit and business associations to advocate for improving neighborhood schools.

- Transform Pimlico Middle School into a math-science magnet school.
- Provide the necessary support to ensure the continued success and growth of the new Fallstaff Elementary School.
- Implement Safe Routes to School and Environmental Learning programs at Cross Country Elementary School.
- Provide additional support services to help students at Northwestern High School succeed academically.
- Develop an ADOPT-A-SCHOOL Program in conjunction with the private sector.

Improve the access to and the quality of public libraries.

- Hire librarians at public schools.
- Form partnerships with private sector to supply books to schools.
- Explore the feasibility of a North West Enoch Pratt regional library at Pimlico Middle School.

Public Safety

The Northern and the Northwest Police departments report that crimes against property and larceny are the most common crimes. These crimes need to be abated so that residents will continue to want to live in the community. Most of the community-based policing takes place during the evening and at night; however, police report that a significant number of crimes in the area occur during the day when it is assumed that most people are away from their homes. A considerable number of crimes in Northwest are perpetrated by youth and occur during school hours.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design techniques can be used to identify and address elements in the physical environment that contribute to the occurrence of illegal activities or feelings of insecurity by users of the space. By employing careful design and proper maintenance, certain types of crimes may be reduced.



Public Safety Recommendations

Increase awareness and organize residents to address crime prevention.

Create a public education campaign to promote safety solutions

- Identify methods for protecting residences and personal property.
- Participate in auto theft prevention training from the Police Department.
- Organize neighborhood-level House Protection Workshops with the Police Department.
- Include merchants along major corridors in crime prevention activities.

Support the existing neighborhood-based community policing initiatives and explore the creation of other initiatives.

- Northwest Citizens on Patrol
- Mount Washington Citizens on Patrol
- Organize daytime block watchers
- Creation of Safe Houses - place where people can go if they need assistance
- Post Block Watch Signs

Improve the safety of all the neighborhoods in the cluster.

Based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), reduce features in the physical environment that may lead to crime.

- Through community associations, identify crime “hot spots.”
- Examine the physical environment of identified “hot spots.”
- Make recommendations to property owners about how to reduce the incidences of illegal activities and/or feeling of insecurity.
- Compare police data with neighborhood-identified “hot spots” in order to determine patterns of crime.
- Identify public streets that are dark and may need additional lighting.
- Notify residents with overgrown bushes and trees which provide cover for criminals.

Reduce Juvenile delinquency.

Improve communication between the community groups, school administrators and police.

- Encourage citizens to report delinquent youths to appropriate authorities.
- Inform the public about school truancy laws and policies.

Provide more organized recreational activities for youths.

- See “recreation and school facilities” section.
- Organize adult mentoring programs.

Community Relations and Communication

Community Associations

The community associations are a natural mechanism for promoting communication and intergroup relations. Strong community associations are the backbone of a healthy neighborhood. Associations provide a vehicle for dialogue and mutual action among diverse neighborhood groups.

To improve capacity and strengthen the community association, each association will:

- Adopt bylaws that assure greater participation and a democratic rotation of officers.
- Develop a strong board and committee structure to address the specific needs of the community.
- Have sector representation on the board to ensure that all members don't come from one area of the neighborhood.
- Create a strong block captain program to ensure sector leadership.
- Assign block captains and the board responsibility for conducting positive programs for the betterment of the residents such as block watch, neighborhood cleanups and other volunteer events, sanitation and housing initiatives, and dissemination of important information.
- Communicate with residents to inform them of meetings and important community issues through a combination of newsletters, emails, and flyers.

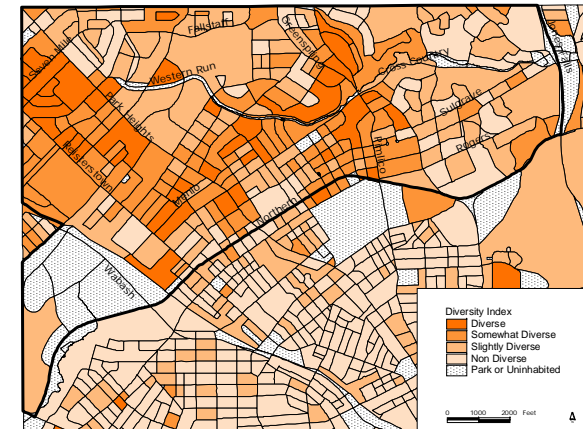
In addition to the power of the individual community association, the presidents of the five northwest communities (Cross Country, Glen, Mt. Washington, Cheswolde, and Fallstaff) meet in a Northwest Presidents Forum once a month. The Forum allows the associations to share information, advice, and resources for the betterment of the entire area. The Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan was initiated by the Northwest Presidents Forum and is a testament to the importance of the Forum.



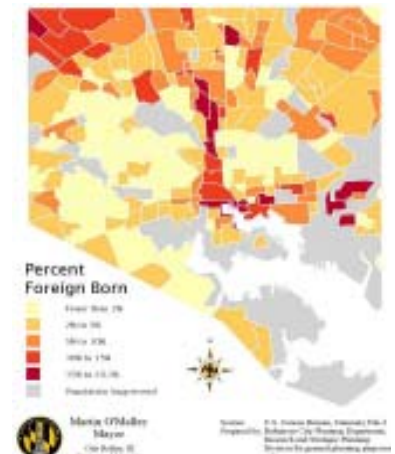
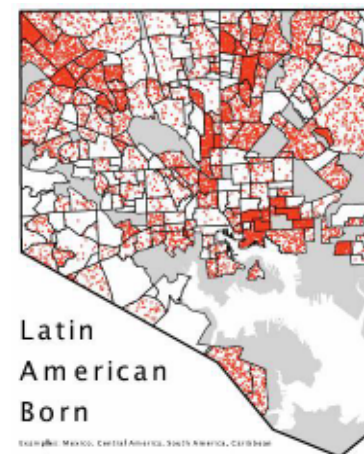
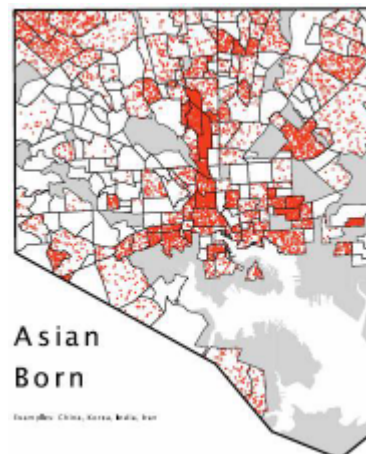
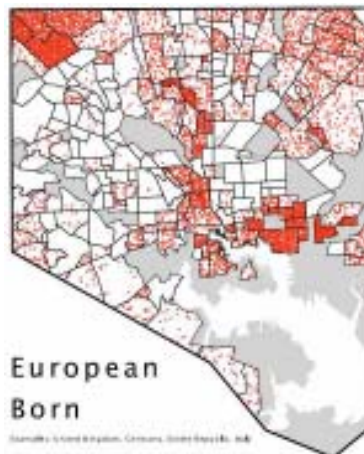
Diversity

Northwest Baltimore is one of the most diverse areas in the Baltimore region. The diversity index (right) indicates the likelihood of someone from one race living next to someone from a different race. Within the Northwest Community Planning Forum, the likelihood is quite high, especially in the corridor between Park Heights Avenue and Reisterstown Road. Unfortunately, although the level of diversity is very high, the level of interaction is not as high.

Northwest Community Planning Forum



With the exception of the Charles Street corridor, Northwest Baltimore has the highest percentage of foreign born persons in Baltimore. Historically, the foreign-born population in Northwest Baltimore was European Jewish immigrants, but now the area is



Community Relations Recommendations

Improve inter-group and cross-cultural relations.

Institute a program of community-organized activities.

- Each community association will establish an events planning committee.
- Committee members will plan neighborhood events and join the other SNAP neighborhoods in planning an annual community-wide event.
- Events will be culturally appropriate for all residents, thus increasing communication and appreciation among groups.
- Support Luckman Park as central activity location.

Improve communication between community associations and neighborhood residents.

Use technology to improve communication.

- Community associations to publish and distribute a newsletter.
- Community associations to create and maintain a website.
- Create email list-serve for community alerts, notices, invitations, and information.

Strengthen capacity development of community associations.

- With staff support from CHAI, a capacity development initiative will be launched using one of the associations as the model.
- Create equal representation throughout the neighborhood by block or sector.
- Make an effort to reach all residents so as to reflect the neighborhood's racial and diverse nature.
- Mandate and create a realistic system for the rotation of officers.
- Help to educate and inform residents as to the importance of volunteerism and commitment to the neighborhood.
- Help establish a network in each community that residents can easily receive information and be involved that includes; establishing and updating websites, newsletters & flyers, and public meetings.